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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2004

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER  
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Assad to urge Ankara to mediate between Syria, Israel -  
Turkiye  
Assad against a Kurdish state in Iraq - Sabah  
FM Gul: Negotiations must be continued by Denktas - Milliyet  
World facing Islamic terror virus - Blair - Sabah  
Fundamentalism virus threatens the world - Blair - Hurriyet  
British pilots protest against US - Hurriyet 1/4  
Tehran halts high-level US delegation to Iran - Aksam  
Turkey's exports in 2003 a record high \$48 billion - Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

Syria in super cooperation with Turkey - Assad - Radikal  
A new page with Syria - Cumhuriyet  
TGS objects to the Annan Plan - Cumhuriyet  
Government crisis continues in TRNC - Radikal 1/4  
US raids Kurds' offices in Kirkuk - Radikal  
Iraqi Shiites against a federation - Radikal 1/4  
Hunt for hijackers in Britain - Cumhuriyet  
Georgia's single candidate presidential elections -  
Cumhuriyet 1/4  
India, Pakistan flirt at SAARC summit - Zaman

BRIEFING

Syria's Assad due in Turkey: Syrian President Bashar Assad said on the eve of his January 6 visit to Turkey that Turkey's EU membership would be welcomed in Syria, and would make Syria a neighbor to the EU. Syria opposes any move that would violate the territorial integrity of Iraq, Assad said. The PKK has been neutralized in Syria, he asserted. 'My visit indicates the extraordinary cooperation between the two countries,' the Syrian leader stressed. 'I am not against Turkish-Israeli cooperation unless it affects Turkey's attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict.' Assad said. Assad also said that Syria wanted to turn a new page in its ties with Turkey. The Turkish press attaches great significance to the Assad visit. After meeting with Turkey's political leaders in Ankara, Assad will proceed to Istanbul for talks with the Turkish business community in an effort to boost economic ties between the two countries. During his meeting with Assad, Prime Minister Erdogan will put forward a proposal for Turkish mediation between Israel and Syria. Israel will convey a message to Assad via Ankara urging the closure of Hamas and Islamic Jihad offices in Damascus.

PM Erdogan's US visit: During his US visit, Prime Minister Erdogan will meet with President Bush on February 28, followed by a joint press conference and lunch, Sunday's "Sabah" reports. The two leaders will discuss Iraq and Cyprus, as well as the forthcoming NATO summit in Istanbul in June. Erdogan will meet with international finance representatives in New York January 26. He will proceed to Washington and meet with Vice President Dick Cheney and some US Congressmen. Erdogan will then deliver a speech at Harvard University, where he will visit his son.

Cyprus: TGS has serious concerns about the UN-sponsored peace plan for Cyprus, Monday's "Cumhuriyet" reports. The

Turkish military is doubtful that the Annan Plan can bring a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem. The TGS believes the MFA must change its attitude toward the Annan Plan, which is designed to cut Turkey off from Cyprus. Turkey must be allowed to maintain a permanent force of 1,000-2,000 troops on the island, TGS believes. The military is concerned that the failure to resolve the property issue through exchange and reparations could later cause problems for Turkey. The TGS is pessimistic about reaching a lasting solution in the short term. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Gul said on Sunday that TRNC leader Rauf Denktas should continue in his post as chief negotiator even after a new government is formed in the north. Ankara is waiting for the formation of a new government before summoning Turkish Cypriot leaders to Turkey for a Cyprus 'summit' hosted by President Sezer later this week.

Unrest between ethnic groups in Kirkuk: Weekend papers report growing tension in Kirkuk. Local US authorities declared a curfew to avoid further casualties from clashes between Kurdish, Turkmen and Arab groups. Turkish papers are concerned that confrontation between ethnic groups might lead to civil unrest. US troops raided the offices of the KDP and PUK in Kirkuk, seizing some unregistered weapons.

#### EDITORIAL OPINION: Cyprus

"Washington is actively involved"

Semih Idiz wrote in the mass appeal Aksam (1/5): "The letter from President Bush to Greek Prime Minister Simitis on the Cyprus issue is a very important development. Surprisingly, it did not receive much press attention in Turkey, but the Greek press has already started complaining about it. The letter clearly indicates that Washington is very determined to seek a settlement to the Cyprus issue and to exert pressure on both sides via Ankara and Athens. .This is bad news for those who view the 'no settlement' option as the best way forward. Washington is apparently convinced that the two sides of Cyprus have neither the political will nor the power to resolve the issue on their own. Thus the US administration will exert its pressure primarily on Turkey and Greece. . With his letter to the Greek Prime Minister, President Bush is encouraging Ankara on the settlement process, and is asking Athens to work more seriously with the Greek Cypriot leadership for a settlement."

"The Consensus Spirit"

Asli Aydinbas wrote in the mass appeal Sabah (1/5): "There is a group in the State Department that is working for a Cyprus settlement in a very determined fashion. Turkey's EU vision and a settlement to the Cyprus issue prior to the May 1 deadline have become part of the White House vision for Turkey as well. If Turkish PM Erdogan comes to the US capital with a solid Cyprus package, he might see more active involvement in the process from the US side. The gist of the issue depends on the compatibility of Turkey's Cyprus package with the Annan Plan."

DEUTSCH